

NSC BRIEFING

21 May 1958

BACKGROUND ON FRANCE'S INTERNAL SECURITY SYSTEM

- I. Ministry of Interior is control point of police apparatus extending all over France.
 - A. Departmental prefect, responsible to Interior Minister has absolute control over all security forces in his department.
 - B. In addition there are nine super prefects in the nine military regions, who can take control of the several departments under them in the event of crisis.
- II. There are three major national police agencies--Prefecture of Police of Seine Department, Surete National, and National Gendermerie. All three practically free of Communists and generally conservative.
 - A. Prefecture of Police of Seine Department controls Paris and suburbs.
 1. Total force about 20,000.
 2. In addition Republican Guard of Paris (3,000), plus six Republican Security Companies (about 1,200 men) and National Gendermerie from First Military Region available.
 3. Thus, one quarter French uniformed police concentrated Paris.
 - B. Surete National controls police in all other towns of over 10,000 inhabitants.
 1. Total uniformed force about 50,000.
 - C. 54 Republican Security Companies--six to each of nine military

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1. Total about 12,000.

- D. National Gendarmerie is used for rural policing.

1. Controlled by Ministry of Defense and can be turned over to Ministry of Interior.

2. Total (48,000) in France proper.

3. Bulk are organized under nine military regions--remainder from one central heavily armed reserve force (Mobile Gendarmerie).

- E. In current crisis, concentration of security forces in Paris area has stripped provinces, required mobilization of reserve gendarmerie.

III. Army forces in France now fully integrated into security structure by government decree last fall.

- A. Army officer in each department is ready "to take charge over civilian prefect in event (of crisis)".

- B. This situation could facilitate take-over by army.

IV. Highly centralized system of national police and other security forces is effectively organized to suppress any overt challenge to constitutional government--by Communists or other extremists.

- A. At same time, very centralization of authority in Paris, coupled with extreme loyalty of security forces to their chiefs at all levels, makes the system itself vulnerable to take-over at top.

- B. Recent independent action by high army officers in Algeria increases possibility that coup attempt, if bolstered by the active support of army, could succeed.

~~Secret Matter~~

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Background statistics to accompany NSC briefing notes:

Military
French ~~XXX~~ Strength:

	Army	Navy (inc Air)	Air Force	Gendarmerie
Totals:	798,000	86,000	153,000	82,000
Metropol. France	218,000			
Algeria (451,000)	387,000	13,000	38,000	13,000
Tunisia (22,000)	13,000	5,000	4,000	--
Morocco (46,000)	31,000	11,000	4,000	--

Rebel (FLN) strength:

"Regulars" 25-30,000 (3-5,000 of these probably in Tunisia)

"Auxiliaries" At least as many, perhaps significantly more.

French air transport available in Algeria:

Three transport squadrons comprising:

32 Nord 2501 aircraft

19 C-47 aircraft

387
13
38
438
22
46
506

European population:

In Algeria	1,200,000
Tunisia	80,000
Morocco	200,000